

Apr 22nd, 4:00 PM

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Ray, Brian, "The Modern Meditation: Video Games Effect on Mood and Stress" (2021). *NEIU Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium*. 3.
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The Modern Meditation: Video Games Effect on Mood and Stress

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This study was designed to explore the positive effects of casual video games, specifically the improvement of mood and decrease of stress. Previous research has shown improvements in state mindfulness in both casual video game play and yoga. Therefore, this study will compare the improvement rates between active yoga participants, passive yoga watchers, active video game players, and passive video game watchers. The passive viewing of video games has grown into a hobby, with websites such as YouTube and Twitch.tv being amongst the most popular places to watch. The passive condition will provide additional context for how engagement affects participant's mood scores. With COVID-19 keeping citizens at home, finding easy entry hobbies that boost mood has never been more important. Participants will begin the study by being exposed to one of the four conditions (e.g., playing a simple video game for 7 minutes, or watching a yoga lesson passively for 7 minutes). Following their interaction, participants will answer an adapted mood inventory questionnaire that includes items from the State Mindfulness Scale (SMS), the Four Dimensional Mood Scale (FDMS), and the Mood/Symptom Checklist (MSC). The third section of the study includes an adapted version of the Player Experience Inventory (PXI), and Content-Based Media Exposure Scale (C-ME). These will measure both the participant's prior experience with various digital media content, and their comfort (e.g., curiosity, mastery, and challenge) with their assigned condition. The final section has participants fill out the Engagement Questionnaire (EQ) to score their engagement with their assigned condition. Demographics will also be collected from participants. I hypothesize that the active video game condition will have an equal, or greater, increase in mood and decrease of stress as the active yoga condition. I also hypothesize that the active conditions will have higher mood scores and engagement scores than the passive conditions.